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U.S. Tells of '54 Guatemala Invasion

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 3 — After a six-year delay, the State Department today published the official documentation on American policy toward the overthrow of the leftist Government in Guatemala in 1954. But all material on the covert role of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Department was omitted.

Many books and articles have been written about the C.I.A.'s role in the invasion of Guatemala from Honduras by Guatemalan exiles who toppled the Government of President Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán.

The secret American involvement was acknowledged in passing by former President Dwight D. Eisenhower in his memoirs. He noted that he overrode the State Department and approved a request by Allen W. Dulles, then Director of Central Intelligence, to supply bombers to the insurgents led by Col. Carlos Castillo Armas.

The volume made public today, the latest in the State Department's series of historical documentations, "Foreign Relations of the United States: 1952-1954: The American Republics," includes a long section on Guatemala that has long been awaited by scholars and journalists because of the known covert role the United States played in overthrowing President Arbenz.

Introduction Cites Limits

But in the introduction, the State Department's historians, who edited the volume, said that "under current Government declassification policies, procedures and regulations," they were not able to document "the widening web" of American Government relationships in the region. The introduction said that for "a more comprehensive accounting," researchers will have to consult other agencies, "such as the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency."

A department official said, however, that if a historian asked the Pentagon and the C.I.A. for files about covert activity in Guatemala, he would be denied access on national security

grounds. "They do not want published anything related to covert activity," he said.

John Glennon, the general editor of the Foreign Relations series, said, "We were not successful in declassifying everything we wanted." He said the department's historical division compiled the volume from 1974 to 1977, but its publication was held up pending resolution of disputes in the Government on declassification.

Another Volume Delayed

A similar delay has held up publication of the Foreign Relations volume that includes the overthrow of the Iranian Government in 1953, which led to the return of the Shah. The C.I.A. has been widely reported to have played a key role in that coup.

State Department officials said the latest volume was important because it covered the first case in which covert activity played a crucial role in American relations with another Government, but the official American documentation of those relations cannot be published in full.

Mr. Glennon said, "We try to make it as comprehensive as we can." He noted that the volume does include some C.I.A. analyses of the situation in Guatemala as well as National Security Council memos. "If we feel we don't have a sufficiently complete record, we can just sit on the record," he said.

"There was more that we would have liked to have gotten in than we got in," he said. "But we felt it was enough in there to make it worthwhile publishing the volume."

Previously published accounts have reported that the United States, concerned by what it perceived to be a growth of Communism in Guatemala under President Arbenz, began building an opposition force, including a few planes flown by C.I.A. pilots. The invasion was touched off by the arrival in Guatemala in May 1954 of a Swedish ship, the *Alfhem*, carrying 2,000 tons of military equipment from Czechoslovakia for the Arbenz army.

The closest the State Department volume comes to acknowledging the C.I.A. role is in quoting from the diary of James C. Hagerty, then President Eisenhower's press secretary, which is in the Eisenhower Library. On June 18, 1954, Mr. Hagerty wrote: "Allen Dulles called early in the morning to tell me that his organization expected there would be an anti-Communist uprising in Guatemala very shortly."

"Officially, we don't know anything about it," he added.

Another reason for the Eisenhower Administration's concern was that a strike had begun in Honduras, and there was concern that the Guatemalan Army might invade and lead an insurrection.

On May 27, 1954, President Eisenhower, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, his brother, Allen, and other top advisers met at the White House to discuss the situation in Guatemala. The record, as published in the State Department volume, says that Secretary of State Dulles expressed concern about the reporting from Mexico City by Sydney Gruson, the correspondent of The New York Times for the region. He said he believed Mr. Gruson was "a very dangerous character and his reporting had done a great deal of harm."

Mr. Eisenhower, according to the report, "said that he often felt that The New York Times was the most untrustworthy newspaper in the United States, at least as far as the areas of the news with which he was personally familiar were concerned."

Mr. Gruson, who is now vice chairman of the New York Times Company, said today that he knew he was "in considerable disfavor with the Dulles brothers because of my reporting, and they did manage to keep me out of Guatemala for the actual invasion and revolution against the Arbenz Government."

He added: "But my banishment didn't last long. I certainly haven't suffered professionally from what I thought at the time was a hysterical attitude on the part of the Administration."